

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the thorough examination of the application that is reflected in the Final Office Action dated January 30, 2007. Applicants also appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 10-20, 26-29, 33 and 35 are allowed, and that claim 4 is objected to but allowable if rewritten in independent form. To expedite prosecution of this application, Applicants amend claim 1 to include the recitations previously recited in claim 4, and cancel claims 4, 5, 30 and 32 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 1, 3, 6-20, 26-29, 33, and 35 (24 total claims; 5 independent claims) remain pending in the application. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Art-Based Rejections

Claims 1, 3, 5-9, 30 and 32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McCarville et al. in view of Palmer.

Claim 1 relates to method of sealing a vacuum membrane to a surface. This method includes the steps of:

- defining a vacuum zone on the surface including placing a double-stick tape on the surface at a boundary of said vacuum zone;
- placing a breather over the surface within said vacuum zone;
- placing a membrane over said breather, said membrane covering said vacuum zone;
- forming a vacuum seal between said membrane and the surface by sticking said membrane to an exposed side of said double stick tape adhered to the surface at said boundary of said vacuum zone; and
- covering said vacuum seal with a laminate release surface. (Emphasis added.)

Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections for at least the following reasons.

Claims 1, 3 and 6-9

The Examiner indicates that claim 4 is objected to, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. To expedite prosecution of this application, Applicants amend claim 1 to include the recitations previously recited in claim 4, and cancel claims 4 and 5 without prejudice or disclaimer. Consequently, the cited references fail to teach or suggest at least these

recitations of claim 1. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 1 and its dependent claims 3 and 6-9 should be withdrawn.

Claims 30 and 32

As noted above, claim 30 and its dependent claim 32 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the rejection of claims 30 and 32 are moot.

In conclusion, for the reasons given above, all claims now presently in the application are believed allowable and such allowance is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner have any questions or wish to further discuss this application, Applicants request that the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney at (480) 385-5060.

If for some reason Applicants have not requested a sufficient extension and/or have not paid a sufficient fee for this response and/or for the extension necessary to prevent abandonment on this application, please consider this as a request for an extension for the required time period and/or authorization to charge Deposit Account No. 50-2091 for any fee which may be due.

Respectfully submitted,

INGRASSIA FISHER & LORENZ

Dated: February 20th, 2007

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